

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 03866 062309Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----037810 062312Z /70

O 062238Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8673
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 3866

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT, UNSC, LE, SY
SUBJ: FIGHTING IN LEBANON

REF: A) STATE 170441 B) STATE 170570

1. CHARGE PASSED MESSAGE REFTEL (A) TO KHADDAM THROUGH HIS INTERPRETER ABOUT 15 MINUTES AFTER COMPLETION OF THEIR BROADER DISCUSSION. HIS REACTION, WHEN CHARGE HAD FIRST RAISED IT DURING DISCUSSION HAD BEEN THAT REPERCUSSION OF SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT BE POSITIVE AND THAT U.S. SHOULD RECONSIDER IT. IT WOULD LEAD NOWHERE. MOREOVER, IT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE PHALANGE AND THE CHAMOUNISTS TO CONTINUE THEIR BEHAVIOR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR PLAN. FINALLY, IT WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE MET WITH SATISFACTION ON EITHER IN SYRIA OR ANYWHERE IN

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ARAB WORLD.

2. KHADDAM REQUESTED CHARGE TO RETURN AND ASKED THAT IN VIEW OF THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING MESSAGE BE RELAYED TO USG: A) IF THE USG TAKES THIS STEP, SYRIA MIGHT DECIDE TO WITHDRAW FROM BEIRUT AND AS A CONSEQUENCE THE ARMED MILITIAS IN BEIRUT ON BOTH SIDES COULD

SETTLE THEIR ACCOUNTS WITH EACH OTHER. IN THIS CASE, SYRIA BELIEVES NO ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP THE RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING THROUGHOUT BEIRUT.

B) IF THE U.S. WANTS TO PLAY ITS ROLE IN THIS MANNER, IT WILL OPEN THE DOOR TO INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT IN THE REGION.

C) THE SITUATION IN LEBANON WAS DEALT WITH AT AN ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE BY PASSAGE OF ARAB RESOLUTIONS. SUCH AN ACTION WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN AGGRESSION AGAINST THE ARAB REGIONAL ORGANIZATION AND ITS RESOLUTIONS. THIS IS SAID TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THAT SYRIA REMAINS EAGER TO COOPERATE WITH U.S. ON THIS SUBJECT AND EVEN MORE EAGER TO SEE PEACE RESTORED TO LEBANON AND IT HAS BORNE MANY SACRIFICES TOWARD THIS END.

D) SYRIA IS ASTONISHED AT THIS DECISION ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT PRES. SARKIS CONTACTED PRES. ASSAD TODAY AND TOLD HIM HE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT RESIGN. THE TWO PRESIDENTS AGREED THAT ONCE THE SITUATION CALMS DOWN AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS, SARKIS WOULD TAKE ACTION TO MOVE SOME OF THE SUDANESE, SAUDI AND SYRIAN TROOPS IN A MANNER THAT WOULD HELP HIS POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. KHADDAM CONCLUDED HIS STATEMENT APPEALING, "DON'T MAKE THIS MISTAKE."

3. CHARGE RECEIVED STATE 170570 AS HE AND KHADDAM'S INTERPRETER WERE REVIEWING NOTES. INTERPRETER TELEPHONED KHADDAM TEXT. HE EXPRESSED HIS THANKS BUT MADE
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NO OTHER COMMENT.

4. MOST IMPORTANT POINT MADE BY KHADDAM DURING INITIAL CONVERSATION WAS THAT ASSAD HAS ORDERED SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON TO SHOW RESTRAINT AND TO TOLERATE PROVOCATIONS WITHIN LIMITS. LAST NIGHT, A SYRIAN UNIT WAS SUBJECT TO ARTILLERY FIRE BUT DID NOT RETURN FIRE. KHADDAM SAID THERE WERE OF COURSE LIMITS TO SYRIA'S TOLERANCE BUT IT WOULD ACCEPT CEASE FIRE IF THE OTHER SIDE DID. SYRIA WOULD NOT AGREE, HOWEVER, TO A UNILATERAL CEASE FIRE. KHADDAM EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT SYRIA HAD IMPOSED ANY CONDITIONS WHATSOEVER ON ITS AGREEMENT TO A CEASE FIRE IN EAST BEIRUT. DETAILS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.
PELLETREAU

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC03866
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780278-0306
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780792/aaaaczig.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 637a827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 170441, 78 STATE 170570
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2107910
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIGHTING IN LEBANON
TAGS: PINT, LE, SY, US, UNSC
To: STATE BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/637a827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014